Periodic Respiration

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Periodic Respiration

by Apocalyptic_Space_They

Summary

"What do you pray for Hannibal?"

"I don't pray Will"

Hannibal could really disappear now, Will betrayed him, he could disappear forever, never look back. It would be so easy to walk off into the dark, never to be seen again. He'd done it a million times.

But he'd left the love of his life bleeding out on his floor, all according to the plan they'd built so they could be free and together.

Hannibal promised Will his love was real and eternal

And he always kept his promises

He was way past walking away now

Set between S2 & S3

Notes

This is a repost

In the worst stroke of dumb luck on the face of the planet, I accidentally orphaned my long Hannibal S3 reprise fic series.

I'm pretty sick about it.

You can see the original under the series name "You Taste Like Blood and Cherry Wine"

See the end of the work for more notes

Periodic breathing: clusters of breaths separated by intervals of apnea or near-apnea, common with newborns who can pause their breathing for over 10 seconds, followed by a series of fast shallow breaths before returning to a steady regular breathing pattern again.

Periodic Respiration is a normal part of learning to breathe. Time and practice will resolve the problem on its own.

~_____~

What do you pray for Hannibal?

I don't pray

~

Rain, cleanses, washes dirt away, makes the earth beautiful and new. To little rain, we waste away, parched and devastated, to much rain all at once, then the floods come. In the desert rain is so rare that the environment isn't prepared. When the balance tips, bringing raging storms, the land can't absorb the water fast enough. Great violent rivers of muddy water sweep over the barren landscape.

When the skies clear and the water finally seeps into the arid thirsty soil, new beautiful life explodes, ready and waiting for this singular moment. Persephone's hand on the desert floor. There's romance in a thunderstorm.

Hannibal let the rain wash over his face while he thought. He could really disappear now, Will betrayed him, he could disappear forever, never look back. It would be so easy to walk off into the dark, never to be seen again. He'd done it a million times.

His front door clicked shut behind him with a finality that was sickening. They'd gone round and round debating the necessity of this part of the plan.

Hannibal was never really comfortable with how cavalier the FBI was with Will's well-being. They only saw him as an expendable resource. He'd gutted half of fucking Maryland before anyone even noticed that Will was sick. It shouldn't have been that hard to get Will taken off all the superfluous cases that were hurting him so terribly.

The FBI brought him on to solve complicated cases, to catch the Chesapeake Ripper. They were eating him up, wasting his precious life force on the most pedestrian, gauche mass murderers and spree killers. You don't take a nuclear bomb to a knife fight, especially if the nuclear bomb has a fever of 105°. It was insulting, dangerous, and wasteful.

These good ole American as Apple pie federal employees should've noticed the suffering of their friend if he did right? Because they had the superior sense of empathy? So they claimed, but no, it never paid to bet on the empathy and generosity of a righteous man. They reserved their assistance exclusively for those they deemed worthy. The rules assigning worth, a shell game only they knew the rules of. Those government funded hypocrites were happy to work Will like a dog while barely giving him the consideration they would give an actual dog.

They were always much to busy looking away from him, avoiding the way he made them feel, uncomfortable with his brilliance, all the ways he was different than them. Not Hannibal, from the moment they met he could barely stand to look away from Will Graham. Considering their very recent history with the FBI and Will's health, leaving the love of his life bleeding out on his floor intentionally, well it galled.

In the end Will was right though, he almost always was. His beautiful ruthless love knew the best chance they had to see this through successfully was if their friends thought Will had every reason to hate him. They were giving up to much to start out in anything but the best possible position so-

Alana, sprawled broken on the pavement, made a little throaty gurgly keening sound, only half aware he was there. She rankled his nerves. It would be so easy to step on her, end her meddling for good. Unfortunately she wasn't done playing her part. There would be plenty of time for that later.

He didn't have the luxury right now, he needed to think about this. William was lying to him after insisting that Hannibal stop lying, the double standard burned like lightning from the gods themselves. He wanted Hannibal to kill him. That hurt.

Don't lump me in with them Hannibal

Were Will's deceptions also lies of omission then? No, he said it out loud, but in a place they both knew they couldn't speak freely. The bugs the FBI had hidden all over both of their homes made sure of that. Which meant they both knew nothing they said in those places were ever the complete truth. It was impossible to say with any meaningful clarity whether it was meant as a hint or a deception. Still Will told the FBI about some of the plan, then again he'd known Will was going to need to tell them about some of the plan in order for them to execute it. He tried to get Hannibal to kill him rather then leave with him.

In the moment knowing Will sold him out, that he'd rather die by his hand then leave with him. Hannibal was devastated, heartbroken, certain that the betrayal meant the only real love he'd ever known other then his dear sweet Mischa, was a lie. He cut Abigail's throat so that Will would know what it felt like to have your love spat back in your face, so that he would understand in no uncertain terms that Hannibal would never murder Will frivolously.

Will couldn't ask that of him, not before the end anyway. Not until they were old and grey. Not unless there was no other choice, not on a whim, not to avoid a choice.

Now he wasn't sure of his own choice, if it was the right one, or what any of it actually meant. Will hadn't tried to stop the stab to his abdomen he knew was coming, not at all, not like he tried to stop Hannibal from killing Abigail. He already regretted that, regretted

responding in hurt. Everything felt to big, to much turmoil. If William did love him, that was a reaction he would pay for dearly... he might even lose Will for real because of it.

Hannibal was having more trouble then usual knowing how he was supposed to be feeling. Normally if he met this kind of speed bump he'd kill everyone, change his name, and disappear. But Will-.

The flood of raw, brand new emotion drowned Hannibal's nervous system making him want to furiously protect and strike out mindlessly. The need to crush, to destroy was so strong he could taste it, but Will named him a man, not a beast, thus he had a man's choice to make. Right now. No more time.

It came down to whether or not what Will did was unforgivable. Was lying about Freddie, telling the FBI more about their plan then he expected a deal breaker? Was asking Hannibal to kill him an unforgivable sin? Was killing Abigail unforgivable?

Was it? Were either of them redeemable in each other's eyes? He stepped over Alana, paying her no mind other than taking the jacket Will left draped over her. She was otherwise meaningless outside the payment chit she would come to represent later.

I don't know Hannibal, do you have a womb for me? That's what I need

Alana should be proud of her key part in their plan. Thank God he'd be free of her neverending moralizing and complaining for awhile. Making someone so deeply fundamentally hypocritical, so incessantly self involved, feel even more special then their baseline sense of entitlement assumed was their divine right, was a full time job all it's own. She was so insecurely attached to her own identity, she needed constant reassurance that she was better then everyone around her. It was exhausting, annoying. A gnat whining in your face while you're trying to relax. You're just another filthy animal Alana, just like the rest of us. Good riddance for now.

Sliding the jacket on to cover the large wash of blood over his shoulder, Hannibal kept moving, thinking on his feet as he went. The next step would be easier if he was already at Bedelia's house before she arrived back home... so she could find him in an apparently vulnerable state, let her feel like she had the upper hand. Bedelia was smart, crafty, adaptable, but arrogant. It would be her undoing eventually. But not today, today he needed her services.

Still, that was the crux of the situation wasn't it? He'd already decided what he was going to do. He'd promised Will they'd do this as a team, that he'd follow Will's lead, that they would design this plan together. A perfect plan that would play to each of their strengths, so that one day, when the time came, they could finally be truly free.

Nothing was tangibly different for Hannibal now. He needed Will Graham in his life, he'd promised that his love was real, that they'd find a way to be together, and he always kept his promises. So he was sticking to the plan.

Hannibal supposed it might be different for Will now, that he might not come once he was healed, not after losing Abigail twice, by his own hand. It wouldn't be entirely outside reason

for Hannibal to be waiting for a reunion that would never come. It hurt to know he'd potentially ended them with one second of furious heartbreak.

Achilles, threw himself disguised into hell to bring Patroclus home. Likewise life without Will Graham didn't bear considering unless he absolutely had to, so he would carry on with the plan they already had in place, with one or two little adjustments.

Hope springs eternal even in this ancient unfeeling heart. Be my Persephone Will, touch this tired old soul again so that your beautiful blood flowers may bloom radiant across my reborn heart.

Please.

First things first, Hannibal needed to get off the street. His second car, the unassuming four door sedan with a different name on the title, was parked around the corner. He slid easily behind the wheel and headed towards Bedelia's house before he could second guess himself anymore.

Time for a little theatrical improv, his favorite kind.

~

Things had come together with Bedelia perfectly. She was a civilized lady after all.

Civilized people were taught to see nudity as a shameful weakness, something to hide. So seeing him naked, fresh from a shower, she saw what he wanted her to see, a desperate lonely man, a tiger with his teeth ripped out. Her eyes ran critical appraisal over his body, his dick, with a pointed quirked eyebrow. A heavy handed attempt at making him feel inadequate and decrepit. For one shining moment he imagined telling her he was mostly a bottom so whatever aspersions she was hoping to cast rarely mattered, just to watch her world view shift so violently.

It wouldn't do to remind her of his attachment to Will right now. It suited his purposes for her to think he was helpless so if she thought insulting his masculinity would make him easier to handle so be it. As if he'd never killed anyone naked. As if he couldn't kill her 20 different ways with his bare hands, with his teeth, before she could turn the gun on him. He'd be insulted if it wasn't so useful for her to underestimate him.

In Bedelia's favor, if he'd never met Will, he might've been genuinely tempted by her offer. The strategic verbal professional back and forth he and Bedelia shared was the closest he'd ever come to a human connection since Mischa. There was a time when it felt like enough.

Now there was Will Graham, his radiant blood God in the center of their universe stitched tight with love and death. Sacred. Being subsumed, consumed by Will Graham was transcendent. He was furious burning death spun with raging watery birth. Will was the screaming face of God born from nothing, rising into the chasm of the abyss to deliver Hannibal in his image. He would live in the eye of this storm for all eternity, until their last thoughts were washed away on a tsunami of blood and viscera.

No amount of cold intellectual sparring could ever compare. It wasn't her fault she wasn't Will, she would do her best, serve her purpose in the plan whether she knew it or not. Smart as she was she might even suspect that she'd been played in the end. Of course by then it would be much to late to deflect the ruthless invisible hand of fate coming for her. He quirked a small smile at that thought, a warm and rosey future to keep his strength in the coming trials. Bedelia hummed in disapproving thought.

"What's so funny Hannibal?"

Hannibal made a show of frustrated deference. Let her think the tiger lost his teeth.

"My apologies my dear, I was only thinking that I'm quite pleased that you're back. As usual Bedelia your timing is impeccable."

She looked at him long and speculative, this was the sparring they always did. A wrote display they were both familiar with.

"Well Hannibal, while the situation isn't ideal I find that I'm glad to be back as well. I do believe a European vacation is exactly what I needed for my fragile constitution."

"Quite a lovely idea. I need to run a quick errand Bedelia. My new credit cards are on the dresser, If you'd be so kind as to book us two first class flights, to... Italy, Don't you think? The ocean air will do you good. I need to get back to my roots. Put Will Graham in the rearview mirror as they say. We can head out after I get back."

Bedelia waved her mostly empty glass of bourbon vaguely.

"Of course... Oh Hannibal?"

"Yes my dear?"

"Are you wearing a shirt from... *Land's End*?"

Hannibal employed all his skill of deception to not pluck at the hunter green shirt he was wearing. He knew it was a risk to wear Will's shirt in front of Bedelia. She was much to perceptive. In the end he wasn't ready to leave Will's influence entirely behind and gambled on it looking pathetic and grasping to Bedelia.

Maybe it was even. He found he didn't care. He picked up a bag on his way out the door that'd been sitting unobtrusively in the corner. He needed to find a PO box shop that would tingle Will's predatorial senses, inspire him to look deeper. He had to leave a message that couldn't be misconstrued as anything else but I'm still in if you are. Come find me My Sweet Will.

I'm right here.

~

2 weeks later

Hannibal Lecter was by nature a patient man. Some predators roamed far and wide looking for their prey, some found a comfortable spot and waited for their dinner to come to them. Hannibal was the latter variety. He was well suited to waiting for that golden opportunity.

Waiting to hear from Will while playing mind games with Bedelia was testing every last scrap of his nearly superhuman patience. Bedelia was cranky, she'd presumed they'd have a sexual relationship that he wasn't interested in. The idea of her sharing his proclivities was laughable. Regardless her offended ego made her prickly, snarky about Will. It was trying at best. Every day he considered just killing her and getting it over with, moving on, finally disappearing.

He wouldn't do that until he knew Will wasn't coming. William wouldn't be pleased if Hannibal killed Bedelia before they were reunited. He wanted to do it himself. Partially because he delighted in the moment when their dinner realized that underestimating Will was their first and last mistake. Largely because Bedelia in her jealousy at feeling replaced had a particularly low opinion of Will. There was very little Will hated more then being belittled by people who never bothered to look at him... especially if those people had proximity to Hannibal, especially if those people couldn't actually *see* Hannibal, if they only coveted the person suit.

Will's perfect empathy made him a reluctant emotional magpie. He couldn't help but absorb the feelings of the people around him. He felt it when people thought of him as something less than. He could feel it, to intimately, when people who claimed to love Hannibal, only loved the person suit... When they couldn't even see Hannibal right in front of them.

~~*For he is a jealous God, righteous in his punishment of the wicked and heretical*~~

So Hannibal sat in Limbo listening to Bedelia who was pickling herself in bourbon, barbiturates, and opiates, endlessly snipe at him about everything. Her desire to rip out his fangs and mount them on her mantelpiece directly conflicting with her need to be numb to her failure to do so.

While it wasn't a romantic vacation in the way it would be with his Will. He was still alive and free. That was enough for today. It had to be. In the mean time he waited, thought to much, felt his brand new feelings flame and slosh about, constantly checked his phone for news about the status of the p.o. box, and generally did a lot of things that were not brooding. It was a very near thing though.

BZZZZZZZZZ

BZZZZZZZZZ

BZZZZZZZZZ

Damn. Hannibal's phone buzzed into life on the marble countertop. He didn't visibly startle because he had perfect control of his body but inside his beast raged and thrashed. Sometimes

a predator's instincts just didn't mesh well with modern technology. Hastily he picked it up trying not to get to hopeful about it. He was hopeful about it.

The new emails:

∅ Chiron's Customer Service Team

Safety deposit box retrieval

∅ Chiron's Mystic Mountain

Thank you for renewing your boxes with us

Dr Roman Fell,

We're notifying you that as of today, your second safe deposit box number #1032 was released to William Graham, co-signer of said box, upon the renewal of safety deposit box #1031 & P. O. Box #1033 per your request. Box #1032 has now been closed.

We Appreciate Your Business!

Chiron's Customer Service Team

So Will found the PO Box. Now it really was a waiting game.

The next week was an excruciating infinity of of waiting, punctuated by notifications from various companies letting him know this and that was going on. Will did seem to be moving forward with the plan. The next day Will got the pickup Truck he'd put in Will's name, stashed in long term parking. Then a surprise, a text alert from a U-Haul company letting him know his trailer had been picked up.

Clever, clever William might not be able to safely call yet, but Hannibal's phone number and email address were all over all of the paperwork, so he was letting Hannibal know his progress in the way he could. That was the first evidence that Will might actually be coming to meet him. A delicious reward equal in weight to the risk of keeping this burner phone for this exact purpose. He couldn't relax yet, but he'd take whatever positives he could get.

The day after that Will emptied out the storage facility stocked with all the various things he'd need to safely sail across the ocean. Despite himself, Hannibal was starting to hope, hope was such a sweet temptation, the most fatal poison. He wasn't sure what he would do if William betrayed him again. Kill everyone, die, run into the deepest dark never to be seen again.

He wasn't brooding so he didn't think about it. He aggressively didn't think about it at all.

First thing in the morning, the sail boat was picked up, it's dock rental cancelled by one William Graham. By the time brunch rolled around the satellite phone that was left on the boat had been activated.

Very carefully, exceptionally casually Hannibal walked to his bedroom and closed the door behind him, shutting out whatever cutting remark Bedelia aimed at him.

Hannibal Lecter was a man who'd killed more then some people had known in their whole lives. He didn't get scared, he didn't panic. His hands did not shake as he got his own satellite phone out of it's hiding place. He carefully looked up at the full moon, reciting ancient anatomy trivia to steady his nerves while he wasn't waiting.

Bleeeeeep

Bleeeeeep

Enough. He answered the phone that only had one number programmed into it.

"William"

"Hannibal"

Hannibal could feel the shape of Will's smile, heavy with affection, in that one word, his own name.

Hades took Persephone's hand, waltzing in the dim caverns of their secret world. Carrion flowers bloom, blood and lust heavy in their rich pollinated hearts.

~~*And on the seventh day, the Lord said let there be light. He hung the sun in the skies of heaven so that he might look down upon his work and see that it was good... And he saw that it was good, so it was good.*~~

Thank you

"William, you found me"

"I did"

~~*And God saw that his work was good*~~

I don't pray William

Amen

End Notes

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